

CANNOT AND CAN
FALL FROM GRACE

BY ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES

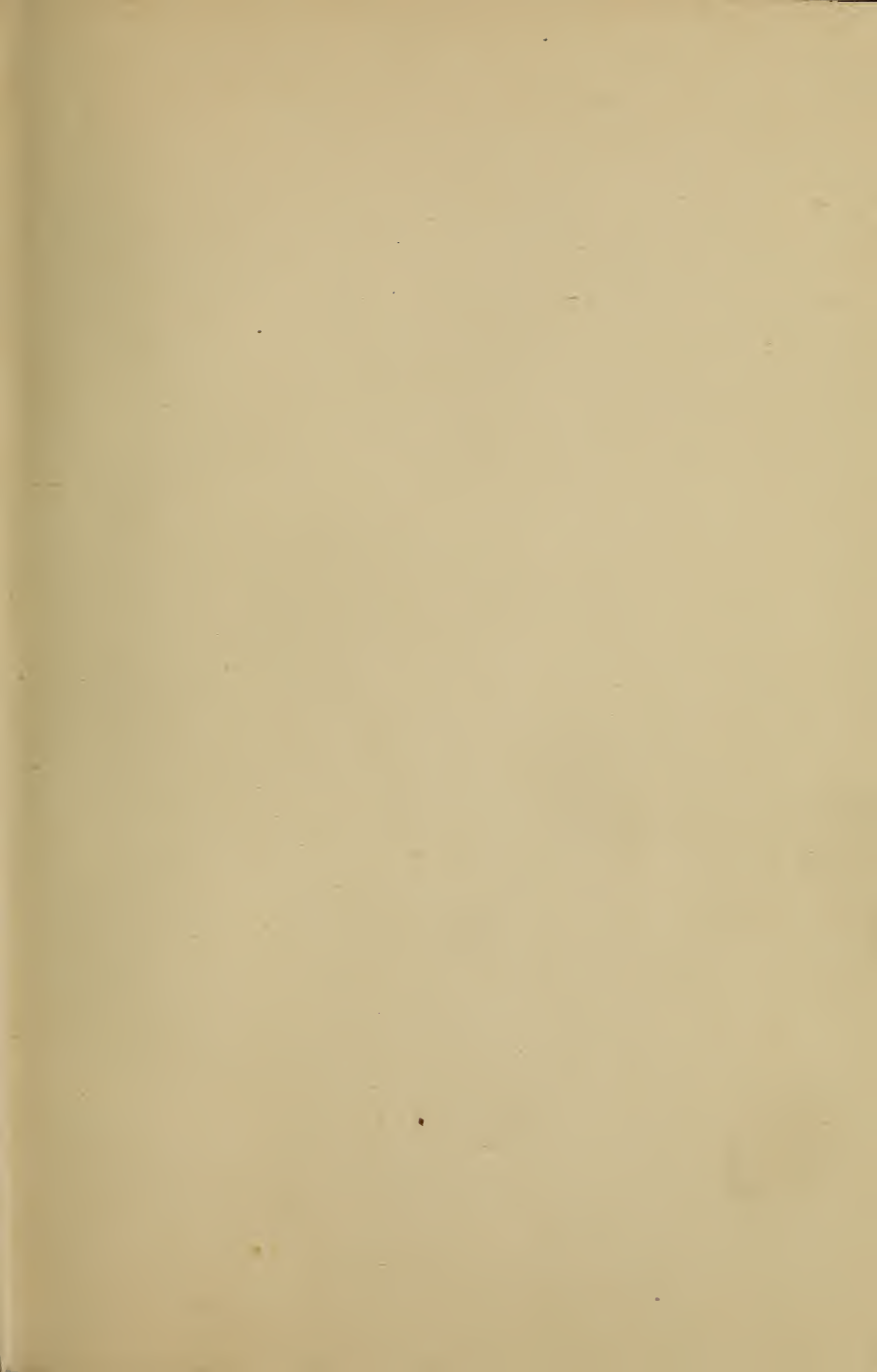


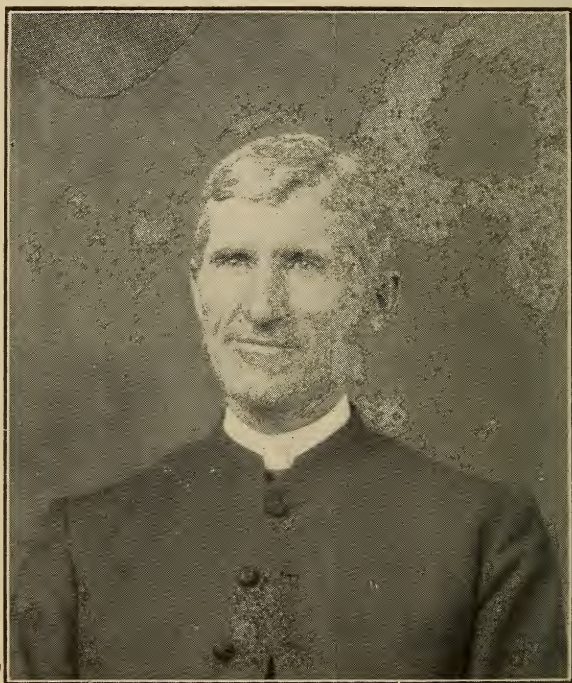
Class BT761

Book P3

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.





ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES

CANNOT AND CAN FALL FROM GRACE

BY ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES

Of the Mississippi Conference



NASHVILLE, TENN.

DALLAS, TEX.; RICHMOND, VA.

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH

SMITH & LAMAR, AGENTS

1914

BT 761
P3

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1914

By ISAAC L. PEEBLES

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington

\$50
JUN 12 1914

© CL A 376274

201

PREFACE.

I HAVE written this pamphlet with the hope of fully posting and settling all lovers of the truth on a very important Scriptural doctrine. In order to do this it will be seen that I adopted a style that is most convincing. At least it appears that way to me. I wish to say that it is a style I received from our Holy Father in answer to my prayer to him. Owing to the conduct of a minister of another Church in my pulpit, while I was absent on a certain Sunday, it became necessary for me to reply to him on a doctrinal question. Knowing that every one who is not an infidel quotes from the Scriptures, and even infidels too, I went into a certain woods and knelt before God and earnestly asked him to give me light as to how to discuss controverted questions so as to post and settle those on the right side of the same and to convince those who were wrong; and just as soon as I finished my prayer, feeling sure

that God would answer me, this rule came to me: "Every Scriptural doctrine is in harmony with the Scriptures, and we can know that it is in harmony with the Scriptures by our being able to explain intelligently all Scriptures which seem to be against it, and harmonize them with those directly in its favor." Also when controversy makes two sides to any Scriptural subject, "the side that can explain the Scriptures and points of the opposite side more intelligently than that side can its own Scriptures and points, then that side is the Scriptural side." To God my Holy Father and to my blessed Savior and Holy Ghost be all the glory and honor for any good my writings may result in.

ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES.

MERIDIAN, MISS., March 19, 1914.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. Apostasy and Its Meaning.....	7
II. Controversy Has Made Two Sides to Apostasy.....	8
III. The Scriptures of the Side That One Cannot Fall from Grace So as to Be Lost.....	9
IV. The Points Made by the Side That One Cannot Fall from Grace.....	24
V. The Scriptures of the Side of Falling from Grace.....	34
VI. Points Made by Falling from Grace for Its Defense.....	40
VII. The Tendency of the Doctrine That One Cannot Fall and Be Lost Forever.....	48
VIII. The Tendency of the Doctrine That One Can Fall and Be Lost Forever.....	51
IX. Which Doctrine, if Believed and Lived, Will Finally Place Us in Heaven, Even if It Should Be False in the End of Life?	53
X. The Devil Was the First to Preach That One Cannot Fall.....	58

CANNOT AND CAN FALL FROM GRACE.

I. APOSTASY AND ITS MEANING.

THE word apostasy does not occur at all in our English version of the Bible; in the Greek Bible we have for apostasy *apostasias*, *apostasis*, *apostemi*, and *apostateo*. These words are used in different senses in the Greek Bible. *Apostasias* occurs seven times, five times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. It is said to be a late form of *apostasis*, which occurs only four times in the Old Testament and not at all in the New Testament. The verb *apostemi* occurs one hundred and seventy-three times in the Greek Bible, one hundred and fifty-eight times in the Old Testament and fifteen times in the New Testament. *Apostateo* occurs four times in the Old Testament and not at all in the New Testament.

The word apostasy is from two Greek

words, and they are *apo* (from) and *stenai* or *hestanai* (to depart, to fall, to stand), literally meaning to stand from, to depart from, to fall from, etc. It means to fall any degree from God. It means to fall from God so completely as to be lost forever.

II. CONTROVERSY HAS MADE TWO SIDES TO THE SUBJECT OF APOSTASY.

One side is that one cannot fall from grace so as to be lost forever, and the other is that one may fall from grace so completely as to be lost forever; and, therefore, since there are two sides to this question, it becomes us to state each side, and then quote the strongest Scriptures each side has, and then cite the strongest points each has, and let each side debate them, and by such a method we shall be able to decide intelligently which side is the Scriptural side. The wisdom and fairness of such a course will appear when we remember that the side that can explain the Scriptures and points of the other side more intelligently than that side can those of its opposite side, that side,

in all fairness and truth, is the Scriptural side. In other words, the side that can explain the Scriptures and points of its opposing side more intelligently than its opposing side can explain its own Scriptures and points, that side is, without doubt, the Scriptural side. Now let us in the fear of God and by his grace see which side is the Scriptural side.

III. THE SCRIPTURES OF THE SIDE THAT ONE CANNOT LOSE HIS RELIGION OR FALL FROM GRACE AND BE LOST FOREVER.

The side that claims one cannot lose his religion or fall from grace and be lost forever says to the side that claims that one can lose his religion or fall from grace and be lost forever: "Listen to what the Bible declares concerning this matter: 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' [Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24.] Do you not see that God

not only orders the steps of a good man and delighteth in his way, but will see to it that if he should fall he shall not remain fallen, but will come back again all right?"

The side of falling from grace says: "We believe you are sincere in your interpretation of those verses, but you seem to forget that the Psalmist is not declaring that a good man cannot fall from grace and be lost forever, but he is calling attention to the fact that wicked men are opposing good men, and therefore to encourage good men to endurance, or faithfulness in living right, he assures them that God will not only direct their steps and take pleasure in their good lives, but he will see to it that if the wicked should attack them unexpectedly, or from a quarter not being observed, and defeat or throw them down, they shall not remain fallen or defeated, for he is sustaining them. That this is what the Psalmist is teaching is evident from two facts. First, he says in verse 12: 'The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth,' and also in verse 21: 'The wicked

borroweth, and payeth not again.' Second, he is speaking in verses 23 and 24 of a man whose ways please God, and, too, even when he falls, he falls not as a sinner but as one who is living right. He does not fall by sinning, but as one who is still right with God and still pleasing him by not sinning against him. He is thrown by a wicked man."

The side that one cannot fall says: "Our interpretation of these passages is sustained when God says: 'For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.' [Prov. xxiv. 16.] Is it not plain from this verse that a just man will not be lost forever even if he falls as many as seven times, which means perfection, or no special limit to the number of times he may fall?"

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to overlook the fact again that it is not declared that the just man falls seven times because he sins each time, but that each time he falls as a just man—just with God and just with men. He is not falling because he sins against God, for that is not the reason he falls; but he falls because of the wicked-

ness of a wicked man. That this interpretation is correct is evident from the fact that the inspired writer is writing about the wicked and the just or good. In other words, let us take the preceding fifteenth verse in connection with the sixteenth, the one quoted, and you will see clearly that our interpretation is correct. 'Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place. For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.' Now you can see that the wicked may cause a good man to fall, not because he has sinned, but because the wicked defeated him at a time when the good man was expecting it or not expecting it. The fall that the just man may get because of the wicked may be in money matters. The wicked may cheat him, burn his property, or he may steal his money, etc., but the righteous will rise up again. The wicked may defeat him in court by false witnesses and unjust jurors or judges, but the just man will recover or rise up again. The wicked may slander the just man and for a while ruin his good name, hurt his

character, and even deaden his influence completely for a season, but he will rise up again. The wicked have not only hurt but ruined good men for a while financially, in influence, and in good results; but they would rise up again because they were just, their ways pleased God, and he was with them."

The side that declares that one cannot fall from grace says: "Let us quit the Old Testament, and let us cite the words of the Savior, who said: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' [Mark xvi. 16.] Do you not see that our Savior says most positively that if one believes he shall be saved, and does not even hint anything but that he shall be saved?"

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to forget in quoting that scripture that it does not declare, as you preach, that if one believes right now he is saved in the present, future, and forever. Our Savior says in that verse, he that is now believing 'shall be saved,' and you know that that is in the future; and, too, you seem to forget that the last of that verse declares, 'And he

that believeth not shall be damned'; therefore if your interpretation of 'He that believeth . . . shall be saved' — that is, it means that he who believes right now, in the present tense, shall be saved, irrespective of how he believes or lives in the future; then, to be consistent, you are forced to interpret it to mean that he who disbelieves right now, in the present tense, shall be damned right now, in the present, future, and forever, whether he repents, believes, or disbelieves."

The side that one cannot fall says: "We do believe that when a sinner is once fully awakened to his sins and does not repent or believe, right then and there he is damned, in the present, future, and forever."

The side of falling from grace says: "But Christ does not say that a sinner who does not believe right now is right now damned, in the present, future, and forever, but he says, 'He shall be damned,' which means that his damnation is in the future. We believe our Savior meant that if any one continues to believe in the present tense, he shall be saved; and that if any one continues to dis-

believe in the present tense, he shall be damned. The believing and disbelieving are both in the present tense, and the salvation and damnation are both in the future. No one is fully and finally saved until he is in heaven; and no one is fully and finally damned until he is in hell. You should not forget that when God speaks positively that a believer shall be saved and that an unbeliever shall be damned, without expressing a condition, one is implied. That this is correct, let us now listen to what God says about this matter in Ezekiel. He says: 'When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' [Ezek. xxxiii.

13-15.] So you see from these words of God himself that if he speaks positively to a good man and declares that 'he shall surely live,' he means that if he continues to live right; that is, if he continues to be righteous and does not sin, 'he shall surely live.' Of course if he does not continue righteous and sinless, then, he says, 'For his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.' This is plain enough. God also informs us that when he says positively to the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die,' and does not express a condition, one is implied, for he says: 'If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; . . . restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' So you see that God does declare that conditions are implied even when not expressed."

The side that cannot fall says: "But our Savior said again: 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' [John iii. 36.] Now can you not see that he plainly teaches that one cannot fall from grace, as you

Methodists declare? Can you not see that he gives everlasting life, and therefore he cannot lose it for the reason that it is everlasting life; and hence if one could lose it, it would not be everlasting life?"

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem not to discover that you have disregarded two very important facts in that thirty-sixth verse of the third chapter of John. The first is that the verb 'believeth' is in the present tense, and so is 'hath everlasting life.' Our Savior is continuing to inform us that it is not he who had faith or did believe last week, month, or year, or any year, but it is he who is believing in the present tense. The second fact is that life is a principle and its character is everlasting, and hence one's surrendering or losing it does not change its character in the least. It is still everlasting life, whether one keeps it or not. It does not make it everlasting for him to keep it, nor does it cease to be everlasting when he surrenders or loses it. It finds illustration in the case of a gold dollar. The character of the gold dollar is gold, and therefore one's

keeping it, losing, or even giving it away does not change its character at all, for it remains a gold dollar whether he has it or not. And so it is with everlasting life. Its character is everlasting; and hence one's having it or not having it does not change its character in the least. It remains everlasting life."

The side that cannot fall says: "Our Savior makes it mighty plain to us that one cannot fall from grace when he says: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' [John x. 27, 28.] Now, what can you do with these plain verses but to believe with us that one cannot fall from grace? Do you not see that Christ gives his disciples eternal life and also declares that they shall never perish and that no one can pluck them out of his hand? Do you not know that if one had eternal health and lost it it would not be eternal health? And so it is with eternal life. Can you not see that if one lost his

health it would not be eternal? and also that if one should lose eternal life it would not be eternal life if he could lose it? What can you do with these verses but interpret them as we do, and hence believe as we do, that one cannot lose his religion or fall from grace?"

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to overlook the great difference between health and life. You should not forget that health is a condition and life is a principle. Health depends upon conditions for continuance, but life is a principle, and has its own character, which is eternal, and hence remains eternal whether one keeps it or not. It may be illustrated by a silver dollar. The character of the silver dollar is silver, and hence does not depend upon being kept or lost; in either case it remains a silver dollar. And so it is with eternal life: keeping or losing it does not change its character; it remains eternal life."

The side that cannot fall says: "But our Savior declares that 'they shall never perish.'"

The side of falling from grace says: "Of

course no one can perish so long as he keeps eternal life, but just as soon as he surrenders or loses eternal life he perishes.

The side that cannot fall says: "But our Savior says again: 'Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' "

The side of falling from grace says: "We are thankful to God that no one can take our religion away from us; for if our enemies could take it away from us, they would do so and thereby force us to hell, and we could not prevent it. But, thanks to our Holy Father, he has so constituted us that no one can take it away from us, and therefore if we cease to possess it it will be because we from choice of our own gave it up or lost it; and hence we shall be held responsible for its loss, and not some one else. We are glad that we are free moral agents even after we become the children of God, and therefore still responsible for our lives—that is, the manner in which we live."

The side that cannot fall says: "Paul sustains us in our doctrine that one cannot fall from grace when he declares: 'For I am

persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' [Rom. viii. 38, 39.] Now do you not see that Paul teaches us that there is nothing in the vast domains of God that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

The side of falling from grace says: "Yes, we see that nothing in the vast domains of God can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and we are truly glad that it is just that way, for if it were otherwise we might be separated and lost. But God has so arranged matters that no being, nor anything besides, can separate us from the love of God but ourselves; and hence he will hold none responsible for our separation but ourselves. That this interpretation of those scriptures is correct is clear from Jude's advice to God's people when he said: 'Keep yourselves in the love of God.' [Jude

21.] Why should we keep ourselves in the love of God, Jude? Jude would likely answer: 'Because there is nothing nor any other being but yourselves that can separate you from the love of God; and therefore, in order that you may not do it yourselves, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." ' "

The side that cannot fall from grace says: "We shall now give you a verse that we think you cannot very well answer, if you can answer it at all, and it is this: 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' [1 John iii. 9.] So you see that this verse just simply fixes this matter so completely that we believe that there is no answer for you but to acknowledge that our side is right in its claim that when one is once saved he cannot possibly fall from grace."

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to forget that that passage of scripture teaches the doctrine that one must live without sin; in fact, it declares that one born of God does not sin and that he cannot sin;

and yet you preach that no one can live without sin, and that all do sin, and that they cannot help sinning.”

The side that cannot fall says: “We are not discussing sin or sinning, but that one cannot fall from grace.”

The side of falling from grace says: “We wanted you to see how inconsistent you are. However, you seem to overlook the fact that John prepared us in the sixth verse for the ninth verse, which you just quoted. He said: ‘Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.’ [1 John iii. 6.] In this verse the free moral agency of man is recognized, and the doctrine is that so long as one remains in Christ he cannot sin, and hence he must get out before he can sin. In the ninth verse he presents the same truth in a different light: ‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ [1 John iii. 9.] As long as he keeps the seed God planted in him he cannot sin; but just as soon as he surrenders that seed, then he becomes capable of doing almost anything.”

IV. THE POINTS MADE BY THE SIDE THAT ONE CANNOT FALL FROM GRACE.

1. *The Vine and Its Branches.*—The side that cannot fall says: “You must remember that Christ said, ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches’ [John xv. 5], and you ought to know that the branches of a vine cannot get out of the vine; they have to stay in the vine. Therefore can you not see that, since that is true, when one gets into Christ he cannot get out again?”

The side of falling from grace says: “But you seem to overlook the fact that Christ was not using the vine and its branches to prove that one could not fall, but used it to give us a knowledge of the closeness of the relation we sustain to him and, too, a knowledge of our utter dependence upon him for life. We can have no real spiritual life independent of him. Therefore we have no grounds for concluding that we cannot get out of him like an inert branch of a common vine, which cannot get out, but has to stay in the vine anyhow. Christ said: ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and

I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.' [John xv. 5, 6.] In these verses our Savior shows plainly that it is possible for us branches to abide or not abide in him; or, in other words, it is possible for us to stay in Christ or to get out of him; and that if we stay in him we shall bear much fruit, but if we get out of him we shall wither—that is, lose our life and finally be burned."

2. *God Does Not Damn His Own Children.*—The side that cannot fall from grace says: "Would you damn your own child?"

The side of falling from grace says: "Certainly not."

The side that cannot fall says: "Are you better than God?"

The side of falling from grace says: "Certainly not; neither have we ever hinted that we were as good as he."

The side that cannot fall says: "Will God damn his own children?"

The side of falling from grace says: "God does not damn any one, and therefore when one is damned he has done it himself, for God declares: 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.' [Ezek. xviii. 32.] 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' [Ezek. xxxiii. 11.] The word 'damn' occurs but three times in the Bible, and even then not in the sense of God's damning any one. The Greek *krino* occurs 274 times in the Bible, and *katakrino* twenty times."

The side of falling from grace says: "If you propose to discuss this question on the basis of sentimentality, we wish to inform you that we have as much sentiment as you have, if not more. Would you allow your child to be placed on the corner of the street of a heathen city and set on fire in order to give it light?"

The side that cannot fall says: "No; we would not; and, besides, we would shed the last drop of our blood to prevent it."

The side of falling from grace says: "God allowed his children to be thus treated. Are you better than God? Besides, God allowed some of his children to be whipped severely; some stoned to death; some sawn asunder; some slain with swords; some smoked to death; some sunken to their chins in mud in prisons and allowed to starve to death, looking at food not quite close enough for them to reach it; some crucified with their heads up, while the heads of others were down; some were thrown into the dens of wild animals and torn to pieces; some were burned to death; some tortured and killed one way and some another. Therefore, since you would not allow your children thus to be treated, is it because you are better than God?"

The side that cannot fall says: "Not at all; and we must confess that we see God in a different light from that in which we had seen him before our discussion of this subject began."

The side of falling from grace says: "We hope you can see now that we have as much sentiment as you have, if not more; and, too,

that we are not to discuss this question on the basis of sentimentality, but in the light of God's word, the Bible. You seem to overlook another very important fact, and that is this: that we are not a part of God as our children are a part of us. Our children are our flesh, bone, and blood, but we are no part of God at all; and if you should believe that we are, we should ask you then: 'Who is our mother?' Paul, however, settled that subject well when he said, in speaking of the Ephesians before they became God's children: 'That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' [Eph. ii. 12.] Now you should see that it is plain that all sinners are aliens, and to such God makes a proposition to adopt them into his family as his own children, and that proposition is this: That they believe on his Son; and when they do believe, then they are adopted into God's family, and therefore by that means they become his children. That this

is the case is clear from Paul's own writings under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost when he said: 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' [Rom. viii. 15.] 'To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' [Gal. iv. 5.] From these scriptures we can clearly see that sinners—or, rather, believing sinners—are adopted into God's family without becoming a part of God as our children are a part of us. The word 'adoption' occurs five times in the Bible. One continues a child of God after adoption, not simply because he has been adopted, but by his living right after he is adopted. This is quite clear from the words of Christ in reply to a certain one who said to him: 'Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?' And he then answered his own question and said: 'For whosoever shall do the will of my Fa-

ther which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' [Matt. xii. 47, 48, 50.] So you see that our Savior refused to claim kinship with his own mother unless she did the will of his Father. In other words, he refuses to claim kinship with any one, even his own mother who gave him birth into this world, unless she lived right. Therefore in order to continue a child of God one must live right."

3. *The Third Point Made by the Side That Cannot Fall Is That if God Loses Any of His Children, It Will Be When the Devil Is More Powerful than God.*—This side says: "If one claims that God's children can be lost at all, he makes the devil mightier than God, for if God should lose any of his children at all it would be because the devil is stronger or mightier than God; and, therefore, who would dare to say that the devil is stronger than God?"

The side of falling from grace says: "If you propose to discuss this question on the basis or question of power between God and the devil, we shall prove that you make the

devil more powerful than God by the very position that you have taken. Your position is that when one becomes a child of God it is impossible for him ever to be lost unless the devil become too strong for God to keep him, for that is the only chance for him to be lost or for God to lose him. God will hold on to him or keep him as his child irrespective of how he lives or what he does; he simply cannot be lost unless the devil is more powerful than God. And now," says the side of falling from grace, "we wish to ask you: Did not God create Adam and Eve?"

The side that cannot fall says: "Yes; certainly he did."

The side of falling from grace says: "Well, since God made them, were they not God's? and not only God's, but were they not his children?"

The side that cannot fall says: "They were his creatures because he created them."

"All right," says the side of falling from grace. "Then they belonged to God, for he created them; and not only is this true, but

they were his children because he created them. That they were God's children, listen to Luke, who declares: 'Adam, which was the son of God.' [Luke iii. 38.] From these words we learn that they were God's children, and yet God lost them. They were God's, for he created them, and yet he lost them. Now can you not see that since you declare that God cannot lose his children unless the devil becomes stronger than God—yet he lost Adam and Eve, who were his children—by such a position you make the devil stronger or more powerful than God yourself? We do not believe, like you, that it is a question of power between God and the devil; not at all, but that it is a question of free moral agency. The word *power* occurs 272 times in the Bible, but never in the sense of the devil's being more powerful than God. Paul, in speaking of God's words to him when he was converted, said that God said he was now sending him to the people 'to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' [Acts xxvi. 18.] St. Paul said again in speaking

of Christ: 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil' [Heb. ii. 14], and St. John tells us in speaking of the devil: 'Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.' [Rev. xx. 7.] These scriptures do not teach that the devil is more powerful than God, as your position teaches. Our Savior said: 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' [John v. 40.] From these words one can see that our Savior places the whole matter on free moral agency. He does not hint that the devil was keeping them from coming at all, or that he could prevent their coming at all. Our position is that it is not a question of power between God and the devil, but a matter of free moral agency. It is with the individual man as to whether or not he will remain true to God and live or be unfaithful and die. This is clear from Paul's language when he said: 'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' (Rom. viii. 13.)

V. THE SCRIPTURES OF THE SIDE OF FALLING FROM GRACE.

The side of falling from grace says to the side that cannot fall: "Let us hear the words of God. He says: 'But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.' [Ezek. xviii. 24.] This verse, we think, makes the possibility of falling from grace very plain, so plain that we are unable to get anything else out of it. What can you get?"

The side that cannot fall says: "We understand that that verse has reference to one's turning from self-righteousness."

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to overlook the fact that God wants the self-righteous to turn from self-righteousness, and God will bless him for that; but the righteousness in this scripture pleases God

so well that he does not want him to turn from it at all; and if he does, God declares he shall die. You seem to forget also that two characters are mentioned in this verse. One is righteous, and the other is a wicked character; one was not committing iniquity, or sin, and the other was. Now, God says of the righteous or good man, that if he ceases to be righteous and sins like the wicked character, he shall die. In the first place, 'all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.' It shall be as nothing; and, besides, he shall die in the sins he has committed. Listen to God again. He says: 'When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.' [Ezek. xviii. 26.] Now what can you do with that verse?"

The side that cannot fall says: "He has reference to a nation and not to an individual."

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to overlook a law of language in your interpretation of that passage, and that law

is this: that pronouns refer to their nouns, or rather, as some express it, stand for their nouns. The pronoun in that verse is 'his,' which is a personal pronoun referring to man; whereas if the noun had been nation, the pronoun would have been 'it,' a neuter pronoun, referring to its neuter noun 'nation.' Therefore the plain doctrine in verse 26 is that if a good man who is not sinning against God quits living right and sins against God and dies in sin—that is, has not had it forgiven—he shall die the second death, which is everlasting. The first death is that of his body, and the second death is that of his soul and body. Just think of the fact that he was once righteous because he was not sinning, and yet he turns away, sins, and dies forever! The great apostle Paul said: 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' [1 Cor. ix. 27.] So we see that Paul taught the possibility of falling from grace; and not only that truth, but the possibility of his own

falling, although he had preached to others. To prevent his own falling he declared that he kept his own body under and brought it into subjection."

The side that cannot fall says: "We believe that all that is meant is that if Paul did not keep his body under and bring it into subjection, he would have ceased to be an apostle, and God would not have allowed him to preach; and, besides, God would have laid him on the shelf, and after a while would have taken him on to heaven."

The side of falling from grace says: "If that were all, it would have profited Paul to turn his passions and appetites loose and just gloat them; and then, according to your views, God would have made him quit laboring altogether and laid him on a shelf to have a good and easy time, and then after a time would have taken him on to heaven. Would that not have been awful morality? What community would be safe with characters on that order? Just think of such morality as that, anyhow! Paul would feel slandered if he were now on this earth and

should hear such an interpretation of his writings as that. For more light let us hear the words of Peter. He said: 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' " (2 Pet. ii. 20-22.)

The side that cannot fall says: "We believe Peter is teaching us in those verses that when sinners are awakened to see that they are sinners and then do not accept our Savior, it would have been better for them if they had not been awakened and had not heard of our Savior. That is what we believe Peter is teaching."

The side of falling from grace says: "We

do not doubt that you are honest in giving such an interpretation to Peter's words, but you seem not to see that Peter is talking about those who are cleansed from the pollutions of the world, which means the stains, impurities, guilt, filth, and, to sum it all up in one word, the sins of the world. They are also freed from the entanglements of the world, like the dog that once vomited and ate it, but quit it and became clean; and like the sow that wallowed in the mire or mud and was washed and became clean. Hence can you not see that he was not talking about awakened sinners who refused our Savior? Sinners of that kind, instead of being cleansed from the pollutions of the world and freed from its entanglements, remain in all of them and are not delivered from them at all, as those of whom Peter speaks, because they refused our Savior, their only source of deliverance. Then Peter says of those once delivered, if they are again entangled and overcome by the pollutions of the world, their last state would be worse than the first, and that it would have

been better for them not to have been cleansed and freed from them at all than, after they are freed and cleansed, to go back to them again and become entangled and filthy again. Those who do go back to the pollutions of the world he likens to the dog that has turned to his vomit and is eating it again, and to the sow that was washed clean and goes back to her wallowing in the dirt, mud, and filth again as she did before she was washed. So you see that there is no proof in these passages for the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace."

VI. THE POINTS MADE BY FALLING FROM GRACE FOR ITS DEFENSE.

1. *God's Warnings to His People.*—The side of falling from grace says: "If God's people cannot fall from grace and be lost forever, it is strange that God should warn them; for we understand that warnings imply danger, and then we think that with great propriety we can say that warnings are out of place and are useless when there is no danger. But that God's people are in danger

of falling from grace and being lost forever seems very clear to us from Paul's words to the Christians at Rome. He said: 'For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee.' [Rom. xi. 21.] Before he wrote these words he had called the attention of the Christians at Rome to the fact that some of the believing Jews had ceased to believe and hence were broken off because of their unbelief, and therefore his warning to them."

The side that cannot fall says: "God warns his children, not because they can fall away and be lost, but because he wants to stimulate them to live aright."

The side of falling from grace says: "But you seem to forget that God informed them that he would not spare them if they did not live aright; and, too, you seem to forget that it is said of God: 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.' [Heb. vi. 18.] And, therefore, can you not see that your position represents our Holy Father as saying what is not true in order to get his children to do what is true?"

Why should God declare to them that they would be broken off like the other unbelievers when he knew they would not be broken off? You should know that God hates lies and all else that is untrue and false. Paul said to the Corinthians: 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' " (1 Cor. x. 12.)

The side that cannot fall says: "You seem not to have noticed that Paul said, 'Thinketh he standeth.' They were not standing, but thought they were standing."

The side of falling from grace says: "If they were not standing, but just thought they were, please tell us, therefore, how they could fall. You know that if one is already down he cannot fall, for he has nothing from which he can fall; but Paul informed them that they might fall, and why? Because they were not in a fallen state. They were not down, but up, and hence could fall; and to convince you that our interpretation of that scripture is correct, please allow us to call your attention to the fact that Paul informed those Corinthians that God was not

well pleased with some of the Jews, especially those of whom Paul said: 'Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.' After he mentioned those awful endings of God's own people among the Jews because of their sins against God, he then declared: 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition.' [1 Cor. x. 8-11.] You can now plainly see that God's people who fell and were destroyed are held up to us by Paul as warnings."

The side that cannot fall says: "You should remember that those people mentioned by Paul were Jews, and hence did not have the kind of religion we have; and, therefore, most anything might be expected of them. Our religion is the religion of Christ and, therefore, saves one now and forever."

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to have forgotten that Paul prepared us against the false conclusion to which you have come about those of the religious Jews who fell by sinning against God. He informs us in the beginning of the tenth chapter of First Corinthians that they had the same kind of religion that we have; and to convince you that they did have the same kind of religion that we have, listen to him. He said of those Jews that fell by sinning against God and all the rest of them: 'And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.' [1 Cor. x. 3, 4.] From these verses you can see that their religion was the same kind that we have, and yet the ones who sinned against God fell and were destroyed. Not only did Paul warn God's people because of the possibility of God's people sinning against him and being lost forever, but Peter warned not only God's people, but also God's ministers; therefore listen to him. He said: 'Be sober, be

vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter v. 8.)

The side that cannot fall says: "Peter wrote those words to stimulate the ministry to do their best when they preach, and also to keep at it, although they could not fall."

The side of falling from grace says: "You seem to think that God wants us to do what is wrong and to speak what is really false in order to accomplish good, in the face of Paul's plain language when he said: 'As we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come; whose damnation is just.' [Rom. iii. 8.] And again he said: 'Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.' [Rom. vi. 15.] In the first scripture we quoted from Paul here we learn that he had been accused of saying: 'Let us do evil, that good may come.' This he declares was a slander, and that the damnation of those who declared it was just. In the last verse we quoted from Paul he asks the question, 'Shall we sin, because we are not under the

law, but under grace?’ and then he answers his own question by saying: ‘God forbid.’ From these scriptures it is clear enough that we must not say nor do a false thing in order to accomplish good; and hence can you not see how irreverent and unjust it is to accuse God of what he condemns? May God help us all to be very careful at that point! A warning implies danger; and therefore, when God warns his children, he means that there is danger. Let us believe God and heed all of his warnings.”

2. *God Punishes His Children.*—The side of falling from grace says: “Our second point is that God punishes his own children in this world. That he does is clear from Paul’s words when he said: ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’” (Heb. xii. 6.)

The side that cannot fall says: “It is true that God punishes his children, and why? Because he wants to make them better, just as any true human father who punishes his children; not, therefore, because he

will damn them if he does not thus treat them, or that they will be damned, but because he wants them to be good. Hence Paul says: 'Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?' " (Heb. xii. 9.)

The side of falling from grace says: "It is true that a faithful human father punishes his children, not because he will have to damn them if he does not punish them, but you seem to lose sight of the fact that he punishes them in order not only to prevent their ruin in this life, but to prevent their ruin in eternity; in other words, to prevent them from damning themselves. From all of this you should see clearly that God punishes his children because there is great danger of their bringing not only great discredit upon themselves in this life, but also damnation in the world to come. If there were no danger of evil of any kind and even final and everlasting ruin coming upon God's children, there would be no reason why he

should punish them at all. The Bible in speaking of correcting a child says: 'Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' [Prov. xxiii. 14.] So you see that our point is Scriptural, that the punishment which God gives his children implies the possibility of his children falling from grace and being lost forever; and therefore he punishes them when they need it to prevent their falling and their damnation."

VII. THE TENDENCY OF THE DOCTRINE THAT ONE CANNOT FALL AND BE LOST FOREVER.

The side that one cannot fall says: "Our doctrine tends to stimulate God's people to be faithful and always ready to meet God, because it emphasizes his love for them. That is, God so loves his children that their sins do not lessen his love for them at all. In fact, we believe that through Christ provisions were made for their sins. In other words, we believe that Christ has so suffered and died for our sins that just as soon as we accept him as our Savior we at once cease

to be responsible for any of our past, present, future, and all sins of all kinds, and hence protected fully, freely, finally, and forever against all possibility of falling and of finally being lost."

The side of falling from grace says: "It is right that we should emphasize the love of God, provided that we emphasize it in a right and just way. Not to emphasize this love in a right and just way means an injustice to God. We emphasize God's love, too, and delight in doing so, but how do we emphasize God's love? By emphasizing his justice; for we believe that God is not held up in a proper light when his love is emphasized in such a way as to leave out or ignore his justice. One of God's greatest and most perfect moral attributes is justice, and hence one should see that great discredit is done God when his love is emphasized at the expense of his justice. Let us hear the Bible on this point. The Psalmist says: 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.' [Ps. lxxxix. 14.] God himself in speaking of himself said: 'A just God.' [Isa.

xlv. 21.] So you see that God has declared himself to be a just God; and hence it is quite an injustice to God to emphasize his love without respect for his justice. In other words, to declare that God loves in such a way as to disregard justice is to declare him to be unjust. To love right and properly is to be just. It is an impossibility for any one to love in a right and proper way unless he is just. God's love is not a haphazard or desultory something, but it is organized and orderly. This is quite evident from the following scriptures: 'If a man love me, he will keep my words. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.' [John xiv. 23, 24.] 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' [1 John ii. 4.] 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' [1 John v. 3.] Now, what is the forced conclusion? It is this: that since God does not consider one as having any love at all for him except when he keeps his commandments, therefore God's love for all his intelligent creatures exists or is exer-

cised only according to law. Paul said: 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.' [Rom. iii. 31.] So the tendency of your doctrine is to discredit God and to make its advocates careless and indifferent. It licenses them to be irreligious and sinful."

VIII. THE TENDENCY OF THE DOCTRINE THAT ONE CAN FALL AND BE LOST FOREVER.

The side of falling from grace says: "The doctrine that one can fall from grace and be lost forever tends not only to hold God up to the people as being a tender, merciful, and a loving God, but also as a just God, as the Bible declared when it said: 'The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity.' [Zeph. iii. 5.] Again, it tends to stimulate God's children who believe and live it to respect the rights and feelings of all men and, too, to warn Christians all the time. It tends to incite its believers to diligence all the time till they are in heaven. They know that they have pure and undefiled religion,

and know also that they can lose it; and that they may not lose it, they must live as God requires—they must live aright. They know that they are in danger only when not living aright. While living aright God becomes to them, as Zechariah declares that God himself said: ‘For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire.’ [Zech. ii. 3.] They may feel unwell or indifferent; but knowing that they can fall and be lost, they are thereby stimulated to attend to their Father’s business anyhow, and, too, in the way that he has prescribed. It tends to keep all of its true believers from sin of all kinds. They remember that God hates sin, and hence they must hate it too and rigidly shun it. It tends to keep God’s people who believe it ready to meet him. In order to be in such readiness they know that they must live aright every moment. Its tendency is to the highest type of morality and is onward, upward, without relaxation, until in heaven.”

IX. WHICH DOCTRINE, IF BELIEVED AND LIVED, WILL FINALLY PLACE US IN HEAVEN, EVEN IF IT SHOULD BE FALSE IN THE END OF LIFE?

The side that cannot fall says: "Our doctrine will land us in heaven, even if it is false, because we do not limit the power of God, and we know that he has power to place us in heaven."

The side that can fall says: "You should not forget that our reaching heaven is not by the power of God merely, for we may limit God's power so that God cannot save us, although he may be anxious to do so. If that were not true, then Universalism would be true; and hence God would save all of our race, irrespective of conditions. That sinners, and even God's people, may limit his power so that he cannot save them appears to be the case from the following scriptures. Our Savior said to sinners: 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' [John v. 40.] The Psalmist said of God's people: 'And limited the Holy One of Israel.' [Ps. lxxviii. 41.] So you see that God

is limited by both classes—by his own people and by sinners too. You seem to forget that your doctrine is that when one gets the religion of our Savior he cannot lose it, even if he does not live aright. Or, as your evangelists have declared, if one has religion, he cannot lose it; and therefore if he should shoot the life out of any human being and die the next minute, he would fly right into heaven.”

The side that cannot fall says: “When God’s children sin, it is not they that sin, but their flesh.”

The side of falling from grace says: “It is true that every one has two natures—a spiritual and a material nature—but you seem to forget that those two natures constitute only one person; and, too, when that one person with the two natures is born again, he has control of both, and therefore what can his material nature or flesh do except as he desires and allows it to do? His flesh or body can do nothing except as he permits or makes it to do. It becomes his servant; and hence the plea that all the sinning done

against God is done by the flesh, as if it were itself a distinct and independent being of its own, is contrary to the Scriptures. Paul says: 'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' [Rom. viii. 13.] But a scripture more to the point still is when Paul said: 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' [1 Cor. ix. 27.] Paul gives no ground for the belief that the flesh sins, and we cannot prevent it; but, contrary to that doctrine, he tells us how to prevent its sinning, and that is by keeping it under control. Do not allow it to sin; make it quit sinning; for it is our flesh or body, and therefore, by the grace of God, we should make it mind us and make it serve us as God intended it should do. Let us not talk about the flesh or body as if it were some one else, for it is ours, and it is our own self. Paul says: 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of

the body, ye shall live.' [Rom. viii. 12, 13.] Paul does not write like the flesh runs over us, or controls us, and sins anyhow. God help us to believe the Bible and live it as God requires! So you see your doctrine tends not only to make its believers loose and careless in religious living, but it tends to make them misinterpret and dodge the plain teachings of the Bible. That we have said the right thing about the doctrine that 'one cannot fall from grace and be lost forever,' let us remind you that your evangelists are going all over this country preaching to the people that they cannot lose their religion and that it makes no difference what they do, even if they were to shoot the life out of others and die themselves the next minute after killing others, they would go flying to heaven in spite of it, because they cannot lose their religion. One of them declared that our Savior himself would become a liar if one should lose his religion. What heartless blasphemy! Now, therefore, can you not see that if one believes that he cannot fall, and lives that doctrine, and, too, as

your evangelists declare they can, he will miss heaven and be lost forever? One believes that he cannot fall from grace, and that it makes no difference what he does or how he lives; hence if he believes and practices his doctrine, and at the last finds that it is false, can you not see that he will not only miss heaven itself, but will be lost forever? Therefore the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace is not safe."

Will the Doctrine That One Cannot Fall from Grace and Be Lost Forever if He Does Not Live Right Land Him in Heaven, if He Will Believe It and Live It to the End of Life, Even if It Should Be False? — The side of falling from grace says: "Our doctrine is that one can lose his religion, but that he must not lose it; and to avoid losing it he must live aright. If he does live aright, and at the end finds that the doctrine is untrue and false, then what will follow? He is safe anyhow, because he has religion; and, in the next place, he has lived aright; and hence God will not let him go to hell, because he has lived aright, and so he has a

twofold or double chance to enter heaven, while one who believes and lives the doctrine that no one can lose his religion has no chance of heaven at all if his doctrine should be false. So you should see that the doctrine of falling from grace will give one who believes and lives it a twofold or double chance of heaven, even if it should be false, while the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace will give him no chance of heaven whatever if it should be false and he has believed and lived it. Let us remember that any doctrine believed and lived that will land us in hell, if it should be false, should be dismissed and rigidly avoided as not being of God at all, and hence very dangerous. Let every one hate all false doctrines and rigidly let them alone."

X. THE DEVIL WAS THE FIRST TO PREACH THE DOCTRINE THAT ONE CANNOT FALL.

The side of falling from grace says: "We are afraid of the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace."

The side that cannot fall says: "Why?

What is it that makes you afraid of our side?"

The side of falling from grace says: "Because the devil was the first to preach your doctrine; and not only did he preach it, but he succeeded in what he had undertaken by preaching it. We are afraid of anything that the devil preaches, for we are sure that it is not the truth. Christ said of him: 'He is a liar'; and again he said of him: 'Because there is no truth in him.' [John viii. 44.] The devil does not like the truth."

The side that cannot fall says: "When did the devil preach our doctrine? and what did he have in view in preaching it, if he did preach it at all?"

The side of falling from grace says: "Right in the beginning of our race his object was to ruin us. To convince you that he did preach your doctrine, let us listen to the Bible where it says he questioned Eve, asking her: 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the

fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' [Gen. iii. 1-3.] You likely noticed the devil's question and Eve's answer; but now listen to the devil's words. He said: 'Ye shall not surely die.' [Gen. iii. 4.] God had told Adam and Eve that the day that they ate the forbidden fruit they should surely die [Gen. ii. 17], and the devil tells them that they shall not surely die, and Adam and Eve believed the devil. You all know what a fix he got them into—and all of us as well—and therefore we are afraid of your doctrine. All the aches, pains, woes, hardships, divorces, diseases, sorrows, lies, sins, sufferings, deaths, etc., are due directly or indirectly to the devil's preaching your doctrine and to Adam and Eve's believing it and practicing it. Likely he made the same point with them that you frequently make with the people now: that they were the children of God, and therefore they could not fall. That he did likely point out that they were God's children, and therefore he could not

afford to let them fall, is quite evident from what Luke says: 'Adam, which was the son of God.' [Luke iii. 38.] The devil never did preach our doctrine, which is: 'We have religion and can lose it, but we must not lose it; and not to lose it, we must live aright.' Neither does he preach it now; and why? Because he would lose and not gain anything by it. But he has preached and still preaches your doctrine because it suits him and he can deceive and ruin people by it. Can you not see that for one to believe that he can fall, and that not to fall he must live aright all the time—and he does live aright all the time—he cannot fall, and hence will be sure to reach heaven at last? It does not sound like the devil at all, and it does not suit him at all."

Now, having seen that the side of falling from grace answered the scriptures and points of the side that one cannot fall from grace and be lost forever more intelligently than that side answered those of falling from grace; and, too, seeing that the side of falling from grace has a twofold chance of

heaven, even if the doctrine should be false, and that the side that cannot fall from grace has no chance of heaven at all if its doctrine should be false; and also seeing that the devil preached successfully to the hurt of our whole race the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace, and that he never has and never does preach the doctrine that one can lose his religion, and that not to lose it he must live aright—our inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that falling from grace, or apostasy, is the Scriptural doctrine, and that the doctrine that one cannot fall from grace and be lost is not a Scriptural doctrine.

There are degrees to which one may fall and return, but there is a degree to which, if one fall, he cannot return. Paul made this clear when he said: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God

afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Heb. vi. 4-6.) When one reaches that fatal degree he is gone, and there is no return. May God forbid that any Christian should be so unfortunate as to reach that fatal degree! The surest way of one’s not reaching it is not to fall at all, but to remain faithful to God until he is in heaven.

A consistent Methodist is one who knows that he has religion and that he can lose it, but that he must not lose it; and that he may not lose it, he must live aright and believe aright. Any one who believes and lives the Methodist doctrine of falling from grace cannot miss heaven. Let every one believe it and live it!

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BT
761

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 558 048 1